

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 IO-13 PC-01 CU-02 DHA-02
/086 W

-----291918Z 057406 /47

P R 291648Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5274
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 FREETOWN 1385

LONDON FOR SEITZ

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SL
SUBJ: SIERRA LEONE ELECTION ROUND-UP VII, APRIL 23-29

REF: FREETOWN 1309

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. STATE OF EMERGENCY REMAINS IN EFFECT.
ALTHOUGH THERE IS SURFACE CALM PRACTICALLY THROUGHOUT SIERRA
LEONE, WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE IS EXPECTED WITH ELECTIONS ONLY
A WEEK AWAY. VIOLENCE MOST EXPECTED TO BEGIN MAY 4 AND CONTINUE
THRU MAY 6 ELECTION DAY. MEDIA PARTIAL TO APC, AND MOST
JOURNALISTS SUCCESSFULLY INTIMIDATED. OPPOSITION HAS FAILED
TO PRODUCE NEWSPAPER OR OTHER PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF THEIR
VIEWS, AND RELIES ON MIMEOGRAPHED HANDOUTS. SLPP HAS DISTRIBUTED
LETTER TO COMMISSIONER OF POLICE NOT ONLY COMPLAINING ABOUT
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NOMINATION VIOLENCE, BUT DETAILING APC PLAN FOR THUGS FROM
NORTHERN PROVINCE TO INVADE SOUTHERN AND EASTERN PROVINCES
TO PREVENT SLPP VICTORIES. AFTER RETURN TO CAMPUS THIS WEEK,
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS STAGED TWO-DAY PROTEST AT GOSL'S WIDE-
SPREAD USE OF SIGNS OF SUPPORT FROM SMALL FRACTION OF STUDENT
BODY. LABOR CONGRESS HAS BEEN QUIET BUT MAY BE ON THE VERGE
OF GENERAL STRIKE. LAWYERS ARE HARD AT WORK PREPARING ELECTION

PETITIONS THAT COULD OVERTURN SOME OF THOSE WHO ARE ELECTED, THUS CARRYING CURRENT POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE INTO AUGUST BEFORE GOSL CAN BEGIN TO FUNCTION NORMALLY. END SUMMARY.

2. SIERRA LEONE IS STILL UNDER A STATE OF EMERGENCY CALLED ON FEBRUARY 1, 1977. STATE OF EMERGENCY WILL EXPIRE MAY 1 AND CAN ONLY BE REINSTITUTED BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT WHICH HAQR ALREADY BEEN DISSOLVED. IT UNCLEAR WHETHER STEVENS WILL CALL AN END TO STATE OF EMERGENCY IN NEXT 36 HOURS, LET IT DIE A NATURAL DEATH, OR MAINTAIN IT CONTRARY TO LAW. IF HE MAINTAINS IT, HIS DOING SO PROBABLY WILL BE CHALLENGED IMMEDIATELY IN COURTS.

3. DAYTIME APC-MANNED ROADBLOCKS ON MAJOR RURAL ROADS HAVE DIMINISHED, ALTHOUGH REPORTS STILL REACH FREETOWN OF TRAVELLERS BEING STOPPED, FRISKED AND IN SOME CASES STRIPPED AND INSULTED. PASSAGE MORE DIFFICULT DURING EVENING THAN DAYTIME HOURS. NEVERTHELESS SIERRA LEONE PRODUCE MARKETING BOARD HAS ORDERED ITS DRIVERS OFF THE ROAD BECAUSE OF THE TROUBLE THEY HAD BEEN ENCOUNTERING.

4. SLPP DISTRIBUTED OPEN LETTER TO COMMISSIONER OF POLICE ACCUSING HIM OF BEING COMMITTED TO APC GOVERNMENT NOT ONLY AS CABINET MINISTER BUT BECAUSE HIS FORCES ALLOWED WIDESPREAD VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW. THEY CALL ON HIM, HOWEVER, TO STOP THE IMPLEMENTATION OF APC PLANS FOR ELECTION DAY VIOLENCE. LETTER DESCRIBES PLAN AS INCLUDING SENDING APC THUGS AND GUNMEN FROM KAMBIA TO KAILAHUN, FROM BOMBALI TO KENEMA, FROM PORT LOKO TO BO AND FROM TONKOLILI TO KONO. ENCOURAGEMENT FOR VIOLENCE
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EMANATES FROM PRESIDENT STEVENS HIMSELF AND ESPECIALLY FROM VICE PRESIDENT KOROMA.

5. EARLY IN THE WEEK GOSL-CONTROLLED MEDIA REPORTED UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HAD EXPRESSED STRONG SUPPORT FOR APC AND STEVENS GOVERNMENT, HAD RENOUNCED PREVIOUS BEHAVIOR OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, AND HAD PRAISED FACT THAT POPULARITY OF APC WAS SHOWN BY LARGE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES RETURNED UNOPPOSED. SUBSEQUENTLY MASSIVE TWO-DAY PROTEST CLOSED FURAH BAY COLLEGE WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, AND STUDENTS FORCEFULLY EVICTED APC YOUTH LEAGUE MEMBERS FROM THE CAMPUS. THOUGH THINGS ARE QUIET APRIL 29, STUDENTS ARE APPARENTLY RESTLESS.

6. SUNDAY APC "WE YONE" NEWSPAPER CHARGED SLPP WITH ATTEMPT TO BUY OFF SIERRA LEONE LABOR CONGRESS (SLLC). WEDNESDAY "WE YONE" CARRIED ALLEGED MINUTES OF MIDNIGHT SLPP MEETING THAT INCLUDED PLANS TO DIVIDE LE 25,000 (DOLS21,750) BETWEEN STUDENTS AND SLLC IN ORDER TO WIN THEIR ACTIVE SUPPORT. THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC MENTION OR FURTHER SLLC FOLLOW-UP TO LETTER TO

PRESIDENT STEVENS CRITICAL OF CURRENT SITUATION (PARA 8, REFTEL). THERE ARE RUMORS THAT A GENERAL STRIKE IS BEING PLANNED. OTHER RUMORS THAT SLLC PRESIDENT CHARLES HAS BEEN DETAINED HAVE PROVEN UNTRUE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 FREETOWN 1385

7. WEEKLY "OBSERVER" RAN HEADLINE APRIL 29, QUOTE FIELD DAY FOR LAWYERS UNQUOTE. SLPP HAD NO SUCCESS WITH LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGES BEFORE ELECTORAL COMMISSION. GROUP OF PREDOMINANTLY YOUNG LAWYERS ARE NOW ACTIVELY PREPARING LARGE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL PETITIONS AGAINST PROCEDURES USED ON NOMINATION DAY AND ABOUT OTHER FACTORS. THESE COULD LEAD TO NUMEROUS COURT CASES. GOAL OF THESE LAWYERS AND THEIR PRE-DOMINANTLY SLPP BENEFACTORS IS TO UNSEAT MANY MEMBERS OF NEXT PARLIAMENT, AND THUS CAUSE BYE ELECTIONS. THIS PROCEDURE IS NOT UNCOMMON IN SIERRA LEONE ELECTIONS HAVING WORKED SUCCESSFULLY PREVIOUSLY. ALTHOUGH THERE IS SOME DOUBT ABOUT THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY, AND THE STRENGTH OF CHARACTER OF THE JUDGES, SLPP IS CONVINCED THAT THE LARGER THE NUMBER OF CASES THE MORE LIKELY THAT A GOOD NUMBER WILL BE SUCCESSFUL. ANY PARLIAMENTARIAN WHO IS SUCCESSFULLY PETITIONED WILL BE FORCED TO STEP DOWN FROM PARLIAMENT AND A BYE ELECTION HELD FOR HIS SEAT. THUS A CABINET MINISTER (OR EVEN PRIME MINISTER

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OR VICE PRESIDENT) WILL HAVE TO RESIGN HIS PORTFOLIO IF AN ELECTION PETITION AGAINST HIM HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT AMONG THOSE TARGETS OF THE SLPP LAWYERS ARE VICE PRESIDENT S.I. KOROMA AND PRIME MINISTER C. A. DAMARA-TAYLOR.

8. ON APRIL 28 THERE WAS DISTRIBUTED MIMEOGRAPHED STATEMENT SIGNED BY LEADERS OF SLPP, DNP, AND PROMINENT INDEPENDENT ANNOUNCING CREATION OF AN OPPOSITION ALLIANCE, UNITED NATIONAL ALLIANCE (UNA). UNA STATEMENT PROMISES COURT ACTION ESPECIALLY AGAINST UNOPPOSED CANDIDATES AND DECLARES ILLEGAL THE DECLARATION FOR THE APC BY THE 12 PARAMOUNT CHIEFS, ALL OF WHOM ARE CONSIDERED ELECTED UNOPPOSED. PARAMOUNT CHIEFS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONSIDERED INDEPENDENT OF POLITICS.

9. ARMY CONTINUES TO STAY IN ITS BARRACKS. NUMBER OF CUBAN-TRAINED INTERNAL SECURITY UNIT (ISU) MEN ON THE STREETS SEEMS TO HAVE INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS. MANY ARE IN NEW UNIFORMS. IF THESE ARE NEW ISU MEN, THEIR PRESENCE CONFIRMS RUMORS THAT SEVERAL HUNDRED HAVE BEEN TRAINED SINCE JANUARY. IF SO, THESE NEW RECRUITS ARE OF UNKNOWN DISCIPLINE.

10. EMBASSY WILL REPORT AS EVENTS WARRANT THROUGHOUT NEXT WEEK.
SAMUELS

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Message Attributes

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